

OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS ESSA & TEACHING AND LEARNING



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OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS

ESSA & TEACHING AND LEARNING

On behalf of ForwARd Arkansas, the Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) collaborated with *ForwARd* officers and several state agencies to develop the series: *Opportunities to Advance Education in Arkansas*. This series of working documents uncover and highlight potential intersections among *ForwARd*'s recommendations, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and related efforts among Arkansas agencies to transform Arkansas. These intersections are unpacked and situated in Arkansas' current context to provide a richer understanding of the current work, identify potential next steps, and spotlight the unprecedented opportunities to advance and accelerate Arkansas' transformation.

ForwARd Arkansas. ForwARd Arkansas is a partnership of parents, educators, civic leaders, business professionals, and policy makers committed to helping every Arkansas student graduate prepared for success in college and the workplace. In early 2015, following extensive input from stakeholders, the ForwARd Arkansas Steering Committee crafted "A New Vision for Arkansas Education". The vision outlines seven areas of focus which include recommendations for realizing the vision.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA was signed into law December 10, 2015 replacing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in the latest reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ESSA includes provisions for federal education funds and outlines the requirements under which state and local education agencies receive, distribute, use, and are accountable for the use of these funds.

The language of ESSA provides states and districts with more flexibility, enabling states to determine long-term goals for student success. Given this historic opportunity, it is timely to review state agency initiatives that might intersect with new opportunities under the law.



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Unprecedented Opportunity. ESSA represents a unique opportunity at the state and local district levels to reimagine how federal, state, and local efforts and resources might be coordinated to enhance educational opportunities and outcomes to benefit all students in Arkansas and to close long-standing differences in student success. The launch of the *ForwARd* initiative to advance education in Arkansas provides additional intersections from which momentum might be gained to advance equity and access to opportunities to close those success gaps for the children in Arkansas.

In this Series

ESSA provides states and districts a number of opportunities to advance development and support for teachers and learners, to ensure deeper learning with aligned assessments, and to create multiple pathways so that every student graduates prepared for college, career and community engagement. Leveraging these opportunities, along with opportunities outlined in our other series, provides Arkansas direction and insight as the state continues to transform education and become a leader in student-focused education.

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Intersection with Arkansas Agencies	Every Student Succeeds Act	<i>Opportunities to Develop & Support Educators & Learners</i>
<p>Each student will meet or exceed educational milestones along pathways to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement (Arkansas Department of Education, Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 1).</p> <p>Each student will meet or exceed his/her expected individual growth annually (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 2).</p> <p>The Arkansas Department of Education will build the capacity of each team member to provide efficient and effective customer service that benefits students, respects taxpayers, and serves stakeholders (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 5).</p>	<p>Title II of ESSA allows states to use federal professional development funding to provide teachers, principals and other school leaders (educators) support designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop teachers’ capacity to use data and assessments to improve classroom practice • Support and develop the integration of technology in the classroom 	<p>Arkansas has an opportunity to ensure assessments provide evidence of mastery of standards, personal competencies, and can guide districts in using performance tasks that demonstrate deeper levels of mastery. By using assessment as a measure of individual student growth and as an opportunity to determine strengths and needs, Arkansas can put the focus back on classroom assessments that inform students and educators, including specific recommendations for the state and local level. In New Hampshire the Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) replaces multiple-choice questions for more meaningful tasks that “encourage students to apply what they have learned in sophisticated ways and to use critical thinking and problem solving skills.” Students might turn in research papers showing they know how to analyze and present information, or they might design and cost out a new city park for a math assessment.</p> <p>In Wisconsin, the “skillful and equitable use of technology” is considered an opportunity to transform teaching and learning. Digital tools can enhance student learning, giving students “equitable opportunities to have teachers who are trained to provide” digital opportunities that promote critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation. Wisconsin developed a digital learning plan that utilizes the Future Ready Framework and focuses on equitable access, personalized learning, and applied and engaging learning. Arkansas can learn and network with states such as New Hampshire and Wisconsin and integrate new learning to develop and support educators as they address the needs of and opportunities for students in the state.</p>
<div style="border: 2px solid #003366; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #e6f2ff;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>ForwARd Recommendation</u></p> <p>Improve testing for students, teachers, and schools. The emerging assessment approach should maintain academic rigor, use classroom time thoughtfully (by eliminating redundant or low-priority tests), inform teaching and continuous learning, and measure student progress holistically (including “21st century” higher-order cognitive skills and non-cognitive skills) (Recommendation 3).</p> </div>		

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<p>Agencies</p> <p>Each student will meet or exceed educational milestones along pathways to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement (Arkansas Department of Education, Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 1).</p> <p>Each student will meet or exceed his/her expected individual growth annually (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 2).</p> <p>The ADE will build the capacity of each team member to provide efficient and effective customer service that benefits students, respects taxpayers, and serves stakeholders (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 5).</p>	<p>Title II of ESSA allows states to use federal funding for educators to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement instructional practices that support dual- or concurrent-enrollment programs and the integration of rigorous academics, career and technical education (CTE) and work-based learning • Assist districts in providing professional development that leads to credentialing and certifications for teachers to provide postsecondary, CTE and work-based opportunities • Create common planning time for teacher collaboration • Create sustainable teacher career paths which give teachers the opportunity to exercise increased responsibility and to grow professionally while remaining in the classroom • Support “time banks” or flexible time for collaborative planning, curriculum writing, peer observations, and leading trainings • Compensate teachers for their increased leadership roles and responsibilities (Sec. 2101) 	<p>By expanding and integrating the opportunities that professional development, a broadened teacher pipeline, and digital learning provide, Arkansas can re-imagine practices that support rigorous college and career preparation. Early college opportunities take a center stage in ESSA, as do work-based opportunities. ESSA defines Early College High School and gives more “flexibility to states, school districts, and schools to implement innovative strategies like Early College High School, and allows states and school districts to use federal funds to support the development and implementation of this high school design.” Better preparing students for college, career and community engagement, requires educators roles to shift, as they work “individually and collectively to design customized pathways to graduation for every student” and also requires states to reassess the support they provide to help districts build local capacity.</p> <p>Arkansas has an opportunity to examine barriers, opportunities and supports needed for dual- or concurrent-enrollment and work-based learning. Considerations, as described by iNACOL, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat time, Credit flexibility and Carnegie units • Innovation zones and Pilot programs • Multiple, flexible pathways and Proficiency-based diplomas • Modernized assessments • Building local capacity through specialized training, micro-credentialing, peer learning networks and adequate compensation
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ForwARd Recommendations</u></p> <p>Schools should embed meaningful teacher collaboration time into the school day and provide support to teachers in order to use this time effectively. Districts should assess effectiveness of current professional development. Establish workforce pathways that enable students to earn college credit and pursue career opportunities. Offer adequate broadband access for schools, meeting national standards (Recommendations 1, 2, 4, and 5).</p>		

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Each student will meet or exceed educational milestones along pathways to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement (Arkansas Department of Education, Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 1).

Each student will meet or exceed his/her expected individual growth annually (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 2).

The ADE will build the capacity of each team member to provide efficient and effective customer service that benefits students, respects taxpayers, and serves stakeholders (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 5).

Under ESSA, states must:

- Publicly report on percent of ineffective, out of field and inexperienced teachers and principals who serve high poverty, minority and EL students to ensure these underserved groups have access to high quality learning opportunities (Sec. 1111 and 2101).

Under ESSA, states may:

- Use Title II and competitive grant opportunities to invest, refine, and revise teacher and leader evaluation systems to support continuous improvement of instructional practices
- [ESSA maintains a separate Teacher Incentive Fund-like competitive grant to support innovative evaluation practices at the state and local levels.](#)

Arkansas has an opportunity to shift from meeting “input-based” requirements such as highly qualified teacher provisions, to [a next generation educator and leader workforce under ESSA](#). The leadership of states such as New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Colorado, provide Arkansas insight into what it will take for teachers to assume new roles that support customized pathways. Significant changes to pre-service preparation, professional development and evaluation will be necessary to ensure educators acquire “[new skills to adapt instruction for students with varying levels of competency and interests.](#)” iNACOL recommends states shift the focus to educator competencies as the “basis for credentialing on demonstrated proficiencies” which allows educators to model the type of proficiency-based credentialing that is possible for high schoolers as well. Opportunities include:

- Expanded micro-credentialing and digital badging ([currently used in Arkansas for new teachers](#)) through BloomBoard and other providers
 - [Consider Kettle Moraine’s model](#)
- Digital Badging ([see the MacArthur Foundation’s work](#) and [Nellie Mae Education Foundation’s work](#))
- Alignment of higher education
- Personalized approaches to increase equitable learning opportunities (Integrated with [Arkansas’ current Equity work](#))

Arkansas can continue to refine and integrate opportunities from the existing work of the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) and the Leader Excellence and Development System (LEADS) by incorporating the suggestions above and helping districts offer integrated and aligned professional development.

ForwARd Recommendations

Schools should embed meaningful teacher collaboration time into the school day and provide support to teachers in order to use this time effectively. Districts should assess effectiveness of current professional development. Establish workforce pathways that enable students to earn college credit and pursue career opportunities. Offer adequate broadband access for schools, meeting national standards (Recommendations 1, 2, 4, and 5).

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Intersection with Arkansas Agencies

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The ADE will build the capacity of each team member to provide efficient and effective customer service that benefits students, respects taxpayers, and serves stakeholders (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 5).

For more information on opportunities for district plans, see our series “ESSA and State Systems and Policies.”

Every Student Succeeds Act

Under ESSA, state and district Title I plans must describe how the state will work with school districts to provide for the effective transition of students between middle grades and high school and from high school to postsecondary education. District plans may include coordination with institutions of higher education, employers, and others, and increase student access to dual- or concurrent-enrollment programs, CTE, and work-based learning.

In addition, districts may use Title I funds to support experiential learning opportunities and work-based learning opportunities that provide students with in-depth interactions with industry professionals and academic credit. These provisions facilitate personalized learning by connecting students to their local communities and the world beyond the classroom by engaging them in real-world learning opportunities (Sec. 1111).

Opportunities for Multiple Pathways

Arkansas could leverage Title I plans and dedicate funds to support the vision for creating pathways for every student “to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement” through experiential learning opportunities, work-based learning, and dual-enrollment course work. In California, this type of approach has been implemented as “[Linked Learning](#)” by ConnectEd, in collaboration with the James Irvine Foundation, UCLA, and nine districts. In their work, they identified the following six conditions for connecting rigorous academics and multiple career pathways :

- A commitment to equity
- Connecting linked learning components (through cross-curricular integration)
- A culture of care and support
- Grounding in the real world
- An environment that works for adults
- Redefining success

In “[Expanding Equity: Leveraging the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) to provide Direct Student Services](#),” Chiefs for Change provides an exhaustive review of opportunities for Title I Direct Student Services funds to assist states in considering opportunities and responsibilities.

ForwARd Recommendations

Establish workforce education pathways across the state that enable students to earn college credit in high school and pursue career opportunities while preserving options to pursue higher education. For example, through an advanced manufacturing pathway, a student would have the option to get an advanced manufacturing job after high school, pursue a community college degree, or pursue a bachelor’s degree and beyond. Pathways should be developed with consideration of job opportunities in the state and beyond. Offer competitive funding for school and district proposals to implement structural innovations and support the rigorous implementation of standards (Recommendations 4, 8, and 9).

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<p>Each student will meet or exceed educational milestones along pathways to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement (Arkansas Department of Education, Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 1).</p> <p>Each student will meet or exceed expected individual growth annually (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 2).</p> <p>Each student will be actively engaged in college, career preparation, military service, and/or competitive employment one year after graduation (Vision for Excellence in Education, Goal 4).</p>	<p>For the first time, elementary and secondary schools will be allowed to use Title IV education funding specifically for instruction and training. ESSA includes provisions to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand career counseling • Modernize high schools with work-based learning opportunities • Designate Career and Technical Education (CTE) as a part of a well-rounded education along with traditional subjects including English, math and science • States develop challenging academic standards that are aligned with relevant state CTE standards <p>A new allowable use of funds under Title II of ESSA will support states developing strategies for integrating academic and career and technical education content. Title II funds may also be used for professional development for CTE teachers (Titles I-IV, multiple sections).</p>	<p>ESSA incorporates provisions to help strengthen career and technical education and includes CTE in the definition of a “well-rounded education” along with traditional academic subjects like math and English. Arkansas has an opportunity to incorporate more career readiness indicators in their accountability system and state report cards, while guiding districts on what this might look, so that districts will have information on whether or not they are successfully preparing students for postsecondary education and the workforce through tools like technical skills and college credits. These provisions will help students build skills that prepare them for in-demand career industries ranging from “computer coding to welding, so they can compete in tomorrow’s workforce.” ESSA includes career and guidance counseling programs, as well as training on local workforce needs and options for postsecondary and career pathways.</p> <p>Arkansas has an opportunity to integrate and align different streams of funding, including in this case, Title II and Title IV funds which used together, can support college, career and community readiness for all students.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ForwARd Recommendations</u></p> <p>Establish workforce education pathways across the state that enable students to earn college credit in high school and pursue career opportunities while preserving options to pursue higher education. For example, through an advanced manufacturing pathway, a student would have the option to get an advanced manufacturing job after high school, pursue a community college degree, or pursue a bachelor’s degree and beyond. Pathways should be developed with consideration of job opportunities in the state and beyond. Offer competitive funding for school and district proposals to implement structural innovations and support the rigorous implementation of standards (Recommendations 4, 8, and 9).</p>		

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Resources

[Every Student Succeeds Act, Public Law No: 114-95](#)

[Forward: A New Vision for Arkansas Education](#)

[ISBE ESSA Public Bill Review](#), Feb. 29, 2016

[Title II, Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals](#), USDOE

[Summary of Significant Spending and Fiscal Rules in the Every Student Succeeds Act](#), CCSSO

Develop and Support Educators and Learners

[The Performance Assessment of Competency Education \(PACE\)](#), New Hampshire Department of Education

[Future Ready Framework](#)

[Wisconsin Digital Learning Plan Goals and Overview](#), Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

[Early College Takes Center Stage in ESSA, Jobs for the Future](#), March, 2016

[Promising State Policies for Personalized Learning](#), iNACOL, May 2016

[From Compliance to Continuous Improvement: Accountability, Assessments and Next Generation Workforce with ESSA](#),
Competency Works, June, 2016

[Digital Badging and Micro-credentialing](#), Nellie May Foundation

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[Recommendations for Advancing Personalized Learning Under the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), Knowledge Works, 2016

Deeper Learning with Aligned Assessments

[ESSA Primer: Deeper Learning](#), Alliance for Excellent Education, April, 2016

[Recommendations for Advancing Personalized Learning Under the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), Knowledge Works, 2016

[Critical Area Outline: Innovative Assessment Pilots](#), CCSSO, March, 2016

[Six Ways ESSA will Improve Assessment](#), NEA

Opportunities for Multiple Pathways

[Every Student Succeeds Act: A New Day in Public Education](#), AFT

[Linked Learning: A Guide to Making High Schools Work](#), IDEA, 2013.

Innovation for School Improvement

https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/bryk-gomez_building-nics-education.pdf

ESSA Guidance

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essafactsheet1127.pdf>

<http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2016/ESSA/CCSSODecisionGuideForESSAImplementation.pdf>

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Equity

[Direct Student Services](#), Chiefs for Change, April, 2016.